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## Report on progress in the implementation of the management response to the gender policy evaluation

*Summary*

This report on the implementation of the management response to the evaluation of the implementation of the gender policy describes how UNICEF has used the conclusions and lessons learned from the evaluation as learning and working tools to strengthen organizational performance and effectiveness.

It reports on the progress achieved organization-wide in 2009 and early 2010, showcasing innovative work undertaken at global, regional and country levels, and illustrates the strategic shifts taking place within the organization in the pursuit of excellence in promoting gender equality as a foundation strategy of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2013.

The Global Consultation, held in early 2010, has led to the development of a three-year Strategic Priority Action Plan to guide these efforts and tackle remaining challenges. This report concludes by presenting the highlights of the Strategic Priority Action Plan.

## I. Background

1. The evaluation of the gender policy implementation in UNICEF was completed in early 2008. The findings, presented to the Executive Board in June 2008, were followed by the development of a management response to the evaluation's recommendations, introduced to the Executive Board session of

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February 2009 (see Executive Board decision 2009/4). The main areas of action addressed by the management response are: policy; strategy; accountability; staffing and gender expertise; capacity-building and training; development programming; gender and emergencies; financing gender mainstreaming; United Nations coherence; and engagement with partners. Taken together, these 10 areas serve as the building blocks of an organizational transformation, promoting shifts at the individual, institutional and systemic levels, moving UNICEF towards excellence in promoting gender equality in all aspects of its programming work.

2. An initial one-year plan was subsequently developed, addressing each area of action outlined in the management response, and setting time-bound deliverables for UNICEF divisions and offices worldwide. Its implementation was supported by a dedicated $4.25 million allocation by the Office of the Executive Director. This was used to create an enabling environment for fostering change and innovation and to tackle the challenges identified by the evaluation.

3. UNICEF work in 2009 was guided by an increased awareness that organizational strategies and working methods affect performance and the ability to promote changes in societies and communities. The central approach taken was to establish evidence that programming and cooperation for gender equality are not only necessary in relation to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but also fundamental to improved programme performance. The effort to transform UNICEF into an organization with gender equality at its core requires emphasizing organizational learning and knowledge, capacity development, cross-fertilization of experiences, and the use of technical and 'champion' networks in implementing its gender policy. In this effort, UNICEF has benefited from the strong engagement and support of its Executive Board and Member States, which have helped to sustain the momentum.

4. Initiatives taken at the various levels of the organization during 2009 were part of a comprehensive approach aimed at transforming the institutional environment of UNICEF through policies and guidance. UNICEF promoted and invested in individual change among staff members, leading to strengthened commitment, accountability, and technical capacity, while addressing both formal and informal norms and supporting a work culture that upholds equality and fosters continuous learning.

5. The implementation of the management response coincided with significant wider developments on gender equality in the United Nations system. In particular, efforts to strengthen the gender architecture moved forward with the General Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence (A/RES/63/311) of 14 September 2009, supporting the establishment of a new composite entity. The past year was also one of intensive work for the preparation of a number of high-level events planned to take place in 2010, including the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as the United Nations Economic and Social Council High-level Meeting on 'Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women', and the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in New York in September 2010. These preparations have informed UNICEF follow-up to the gender policy evaluation, opening up numerous opportunities for collaboration among United Nations agencies. Examples of such collaborative work are detailed in subsequent parts of this report.

## II. Progress achieved in implementing the management response

### Strategy

6. In order to establish an organizational baseline on self-assessed staff knowledge, competencies and skills, a survey on gender mainstreaming in UNICEF was conducted in June 2009. This survey confirmed several of the findings of the evaluation of the gender policy implementation and allowed UNICEF to develop a clearer sense of the challenges to be addressed. It confirmed in particular important gaps in staff awareness and understanding of the mainstreaming of gender equality. Only 42 per cent of respondents were able to correctly identify the current definition of 'gender mainstreaming' used by UNICEF, and only 13 per cent of respondents reported being familiar with the UNICEF gender policy, established in 1994. UNICEF staff members are, in general, conscious of their lack of technical skills for gender mainstreaming: as a matter of fact, almost half of respondents identified training on gender concepts and analysis as their main need to strengthen their capacity for the mainstreaming of gender in their work.

7. The baselines established for headquarters and the individual regions by the survey were taken into account in the 2009 implementation of the one-year plan. A number of offices used the findings to assess their specific capacity-building needs. A second survey, in May 2010, will allow UNICEF to assess progress in its efforts to improve organizational performance in gender mainstreaming and help identify remaining challenges.

8. Throughout 2009, attention was given to the review of progress and constraints in the implementation of the initial plan. A Gender Equality Task Force, comprising senior regional and global leaders and chaired by the Director of Policy and Practice, guided and monitored organizational initiatives throughout the year, including a midyear review in July 2009. The review focused on innovations undertaken in the ten categories of recommendations identified by the evaluation. Deputy regional directors led discussions on key organization-wide issues:

(a) Building a strong communications campaign for mobilization and change (The Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office [TACRO]);

(b) Challenges in the application of gender assessment tools (South Asia Regional Office [ROSA]);

(c) Knowledge management strategies using networks of experts (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office [EAPRO]);

(d) Building expert resources for gender-aware programming, with a special focus on harnessing electronic channels (Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Office [CEE/CIS], and West and Central Africa Regional Office [WCARO]);

(e) Relevance and application of gender equality for middle-income country strategies, with a special focus on youth (Middle East and North Africa Regional Office [MENA]);

(f) Embedding and strengthening gender equality within a human rights-based approach to cooperation (Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office [ESARO]).

9. The regions continued to develop these identified issues, which have been incorporated into regional strategies as well as the three-year Strategic Priority Action Plan.

10. An internal communications campaign addressed the staff gaps in awareness of the UNICEF gender policy as well as the conclusions of several gender assessments, conducted in 2009, that suggested a disconnect between global efforts to mainstream gender and staff perceptions of their responsibilities. The communications campaign, which continues in 2010, aims to build awareness of gender equality among UNICEF staff, to develop a common knowledge base, and to engage staff, at all levels, in collective activities to advance gender-equality principles and practices.

11. Using the UNICEF intranet, the communications campaign has gradually built and sustained the momentum of a wide range of initiatives undertaken throughout 2009. It has provided staff with access to new information and interactive resources to deepen understanding and create a sense of community around gender equality in UNICEF. Social media technologies, including blogging, were employed to invigorate the year-long process, and continue to provide support to organizational learning and information sharing, as well as the formation of a strong network of diverse staff championing gender equality. An internal communications plan will support the roll-out and implementation of the Action Plan, as well as a new series of operational guidance documents to contribute to gender equality through UNICEF-supported programmes in all focus areas of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), as described below.

**Policy**

12. The management response recognized the need to clarify and strengthen standards and guidance related to gender equality. Therefore, a key action taken by management was to update the 1994 gender policy after a wide consultative process, involving staff and partners, including other United Nations agencies and Member States.

13. The new UNICEF policy on gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women, currently under review, (a) outlines the organization's vision and goals in promoting gender equality; (b) anchors gender equality within a human rights-based approach to cooperation; (c) clarifies the organization's role in contributing to women's rights and empowerment; and (d) clarifies the links between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The policy also (e) emphasizes the importance of engaging boys and men in promoting gender equality; (f) sets out key roles for UNICEF in capacity development; and (g) outlines institutional arrangements and collaboration with partners on gender issues, including in humanitarian situations and in addressing gender-based violence.

14. The revised gender policy is the framework through which UNICEF addresses the evaluation's key recommendations. Thanks to the wide consultation process that accompanied its development, many of its provisions are already widely known and applied by staff. In 2010, once approved, the gender policy will be rolled out in a vigorous and accessible manner to all staff and will be integrated into all relevant learning, guidance and communications materials.

**Accountability**

15. The gender policy addresses the evaluation's recommendation for developing effective accountability mechanisms at the various levels of management. It establishes that the members of the Global Leadership Team will be accountable to the Executive Director for the implementation of the policy in their respective areas of responsibility and mandates, while managers and individual staff members will assume similar responsibility at their respective levels. The Gender Equality Task Force will monitor, review and support the implementation of its provisions. Senior and midlevel managers are encouraged to define the gender equality outcomes they wish their staff to achieve and to track progress towards the achievement of these results, as a distinct and routine part of collective and individual performance monitoring and assessment.

**Staffing and gender expertise**

16. In the area of human resource management, initiatives undertaken in 2009-2010 were informed by internal consultations, focus group discussions and interviews with gender specialists from other United Nations agencies. These were used to best define the required organizational competencies and to assess the internal needs required to more effectively achieve gender-equality mainstreaming. Technical competencies in selected generic job descriptions were revised and new job profiles, including gender equality, developed. Gender equality talent pools were built through multiple recruitment campaigns paired with a more thorough candidate assessment process.

17. A global roster of gender experts was launched in 2010 and a second database will soon be launched, containing institutions that specialize in gender issues and are sources of expertise across regions and areas of programming. Complementary to global efforts, three regions have developed their own gender rosters. A CEE/CIS gender expert roster, developed in May 2009, includes a total of 19 experts clustered by experience, subregional zones and language ability. The MENA regional office has established a list of 55 institutions working on gender-equality issues in the region, and launched, in early 2010, its own database of gender experts. TACRO has developed a consultant roster with a strong mix of languages and expertise across the region. In 2010, following the launch of the database, UNICEF will further coordinate the global and regional rosters, and provide further training.

**Capacity-building and training**

18. Building up capacity and technical expertise within office teams clearly emerged as a priority in 2009, and a substantive proportion of the funds dedicated to the follow-up of the evaluation were used to contract the services of highly qualified academic and technical experts, and to strengthen the capacity of staff. The training of staff, at all levels, constituted a strategic area of growth. At the global level, learning programmes from induction to programme excellence have been revised. Some programmes, such as programme process, emergency preparedness and response, social protection and budget policies and investments for children, contain specific gender-equality modules. Other learning programmes explicitly mainstream gender-related issues, such as the senior- and midlevel leadership programmes on promoting gender equality in UNICEF. A common introductory e-learning course on gender for staff was produced jointly with the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and will be launched in September 2010. A UNICEF-UNFPA learning package on the linkages between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Eliminations of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is being rolled out in 2010.

19. In order to increase efficiency and sustainability, UNICEF training has been combined with a knowledge management support system. In particular, a gender equality community of practice was launched in January 2010 as a joint UNDP-UNICEF initiative. The main objectives of this joint community of practice are to facilitate the exchange and acquisition of internal and external knowledge on gender equality and mainstreaming within UNICEF, to promote knowledge sharing among United Nations agencies, to support UNICEF work in addressing gender inequalities and promoting children's rights, and to increase the quality and effectiveness of UNICEF assistance to partners. This joint community of practice allows UNICEF staff to access the considerable knowledge of more than 1,400 specialists, including staff from UNICEF, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNFPA as well as other colleagues and independent experts who have experience on a range of gender issues in a variety of contexts. It also allows UNICEF staff to participate more easily in discussions that influence broader United Nations debates by bringing increased attention to gender equality, particularly the rights of girls and boys.

20. A number of initiatives took place at the regional and country levels. Several regions launched dedicated programme training sessions, including gender equality in HIV/AIDS, early childhood development, child protection and basic education. In TACRO alone, a total of 150 staff members were trained during 2009 on mainstreaming gender in their respective areas of responsibility. ESARO conducted a training course for gender focal points in August 2009, and a gender and human rights workshop was organized by WCARO. In MENA, the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research produced a needs assessment and analysis report on capacity-building for gender responsiveness in UNICEF programming, assessing staff knowledge, capacity and needs and proposing a range of recommendations. Several regional meetings (for regional management teams, deputy representatives and operations) held dedicated sessions on gender equality. UNICEF global and field staff associations joined in efforts to inform and support staff in a number of locations.

21. Building on this work, UNICEF was able to identify good or promising practices as well as challenges. Five regions conducted an analysis of their capacity-building initiatives. ROSA concluded that combining capacity-building exercises with the gender review heightens participants' awareness and competencies to successfully recognize and address gender issues in their work, and increases the potential for successful mainstreaming approaches.

22. These capacity-building initiatives reached and mobilized a wide range of UNICEF staff in a short period of time, leading to a significant increase in the number of country programmes applying gender equality principles and addressing concerns explicitly in work plans. The number of country programmes conducting formal gender reviews or assessments has also notably increased.

23. This focus on knowledge building has allowed UNICEF to successfully start addressing major challenges identified by the evaluation related to gaps in staff knowledge and competencies required to mainstream gender into programme

cooperation, management, advocacy, and partnership building. Important challenges, however, remain, such as reducing reliance on outside expertise and building an internal pool of gender experts, while clarifying the degree and scope of gender equality expertise required to achieve organizational excellence. Case studies documenting 2009 experiences have demonstrated that positive outcomes are achieved and accountability is improved when, with senior management support, a gender expert works over a period of time with clear terms of reference and on specific ongoing programmes, leading to the formulation of clearly-specified programme results. This reinforces the challenge for UNICEF to extend its internal capacities and expertise for gender mainstreaming.

24. Other challenges identified by field offices in 2009 include the uneven distribution of gender capacity across offices and the need to 'demystify gender' and create a better common understanding of key concepts. There is a general need for user-friendly gender assessment tools and methodologies that can be adapted to the reality of countries as gender reviews are conducted. These areas will be addressed in the Strategic Priority Action Plan.

25. The development of operational guidance for gender mainstreaming in all focus areas of the MTSP constitutes a first step in this direction. The guidance notes series, launched in early 2010, contains overarching guidance that addresses common issues in UNICEF work, as well as detailed guidance for each of the five MTSP focus areas. The guidance notes have also informed the in-depth review of the MTSP. Developed with contributions from UNICEF staff as well as Executive Board members, the guidance notes will help to ensure that staff members have the tools they need for effective gender analysis and mainstreaming.

**Development programming**

26. In 2009, UNICEF promoted gender reviews and self-assessments as a preferred mechanism to support gender mainstreaming and planning for gender equity at the country programme level. In a directive of March 2009, the Executive Director urged all country offices to ensure the implementation of gender reviews and self-assessment during each programme cycle. Overall, 68 countries reported having conducted gender assessments during 2009. Priority was given to countries undergoing midterm reviews or developing new country programmes. Reports from the regions suggest that this acceleration can be maintained in 2010.

27. The positive impact of these reviews has been analysed and documented by the regional offices. Besides confirming significant challenges, the analyses identifying a range of positive trends: (a) engagement of country representatives in gender assessments, signalling highest-level commitment; (b) engagement of staff in learning and evaluation initiatives; (c) greater emphasis on quality assurance in integrating gender-sensitive aspects in programme documents; and (d) engagement of regional offices in the coordination and sharing of good practices.

28. Some progress was achieved in analysing and understanding the challenging issue of engaging men and boys in the promotion of gender equality. EAPRO and the Innocenti Research Centre collaborated on developing a research paper, 'Engaging with men and boys in gender equality'. TACRO continued to strengthen its innovative approaches to address the high numbers of boys out of school in that region. Working together with UNFPA, UNICEF organized during the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women a side event titled 'Boys and Men:

Partners for Gender Equality'. The side event included a panel discussion aimed at promoting a shared understanding of the benefits of involving boys and men in the promotion and advancement of gender equality. This will continue to be an area requiring sustained research and innovation. As discussions on social change take on heightened strategic importance, particularly for communications for development, new models of engagement and mobilization are expected to emerge.

29. In partnership with the National University of Lanús in Argentina, UNICEF is producing a comprehensive policy paper examining the impact of migration on children, adolescents and women from the perspective of gender equality and human rights. This will be accompanied by a policy and programme guidance handbook designed to support UNICEF field offices in the planning and implementation of initiatives on migration and children. In February 2010, UNICEF launched a web compilation of the concluding observations of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies related to migration and children's rights (www.hrcam.org).

30. Lessons learned from the gender reviews indicate that results are better sustained when programmes have proactively combined the two MTSP foundational strategies of a human rights-based approach to cooperation and gender equality. Case studies citing successful programming for gender equality repeatedly emphasized the importance of applying a human rights-based causality analysis to gender issues, particularly as they relate to the status and empowerment of women. Analyses of discrimination and exclusion patterns within societies help to clarify issues related to power relations and the status of women within these societies. The forthcoming evaluation of the organization's application of a human rights-based approach to cooperation could further support the documentation and dissemination of good practices for gender mainstreaming in UNICEF.

31. Improved action learning, research, and knowledge generation played a key role in UNICEF efforts. The task of organizing and using the knowledge generated in 2009 is integral to the future agenda of UNICEF. A larger challenge will be achieving a more systematic gender perspective in UNICEF research, policy analysis, and knowledge dissemination. This will be pursued by the Gender Equality Task Force together with the newly established Office of Research as well as with the Evaluation Office and the Innocenti Research Centre.

**Integrating gender within humanitarian response**

32. Programming for gender in humanitarian response was also addressed in 2009. The evaluation had pointed to major challenges in the area of humanitarian operations, noting that these consistently neglected to incorporate sufficient gender analysis in needs assessments and in designing services that served crisis-affected girls, boys, women and men according to their specific rights, needs and capacities. The evaluation called for strengthening programme design and field staff capacity in emergency response, in order to ensure that humanitarian action benefited all on an equitable basis. In 2008, UNICEF launched a pilot initiative, initially in 6 and later in 11 countries, mainly in Africa and Asia, to incorporate and support the implementation of sector-specific gender-equality interventions in humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery.

33. In February 2009, a global workshop on gender in humanitarian action was held to share preliminary lessons learned from this initiative. By the end of 2009, initial reports on the pilot countries showed increased capacity of staff and partners

to apply gender analysis to the assessment and design of emergency programmes. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the UNICEF-led water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) education cluster agreed on minimum standards for WASH actors to mainstream gender and protection issues in the provision of water and sanitation; similarly, UNICEF embedded these standards to be also in partnership agreements.

34. Policy-level work on gender in emergencies included strengthening the gender component of the revised UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies and the humanitarian component of the revised gender policy. Operational guidance to field staff will be further strengthened through the humanitarian component of the UNICEF operational guidelines on gender and the establishment of a community of practice on gender and humanitarian action. Ensuring adequate technical support on gender for UNICEF-led clusters in humanitarian response will continue to be a priority throughout 2010 and beyond.

**Financing gender mainstreaming**

35. The long-term tracking of gender-related expenditures remains an organizational challenge, though some progress was made in 2009. The process was initiated with a review of partner practices, with a focus on the gender equality policy marker of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The review pointed out that the marker could also be used to strengthen gender-equality results in the planning stages of country programmes. A robust system has been designed, with criteria based on partner practices. This system contains a gender marker that has been incorporated into the UNICEF information system on enterprise resource planning (Vision-One ERP). The budgets and expenditures attributed to gender will be tracked and reported through the Vision-One ERP system. The criteria, together with a protocol and quality assurance mechanism for using the marker, will enable UNICEF to improve its planning and reporting on expenditures for gender-equality results. The new system will be tested at the regional level and is expected to become an important tool for mainstreaming gender in programmes, particularly by encouraging planning teams to integrate a stronger gender perspective into the design of programmes.

36. The bulk of UNICEF funding for the strengthening of gender mainstreaming will need to come from regular resources, with the promotion of gender-equality results coming from country programmes of cooperation. However, some regions have started to design resource mobilization strategies to strengthen longer-term funding availability. The Gender Equality Task Force will develop a medium-term funding strategy in support of organizational excellence in gender.

**United Nations coherence**

37. UNICEF reinforced its role in inter-agency cooperation for gender equality, building on existing collaboration: United Nations coherence initiatives; the Regional Directors' Team; United Nations country teams (UNCTs); and other joint mechanisms. UNICEF strengthened its collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM and other sister agencies, and played a particularly important role as a member of the United Nations Development Group Gender Task Team in the action learning pilot initiative on the promotion of gender equality, with participation of the UNCTs

in Albania, Morocco and Nepal. The Morocco UNCT is focusing on improving the quality of contributions to the national programme to fight gender-based violence; the Albania UNCT is focusing on a joint programme on domestic violence and linking the global action learning initiative to evaluations planned under the 'Delivering as One' approach; and the Nepal UNCT is focusing on the implementation of the United Nations Gender Thematic Group workplan for 2009-2011.

38. In 2009, UNICEF participated in key inter-agency initiatives on gender, including a close collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. As part of the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign 'UNiTE to End Violence against Women', UNICEF particularly contributed to the development of the regional components of the campaign, especially in Africa. Information collected on the progress of the campaign points to its unifying and energizing effects on field-level work for gender equality.

39. UNICEF was a founding member of a joint United Nations initiative aimed at promoting the rights of marginalized adolescent girls. Adolescent girls are disproportionately affected by development challenges, such as maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and illiteracy, but also have great potential to contribute to social development and economic growth. Five heads of United Nations agencies issued a joint statement in support of an energized effort through a joint United Nations programming framework for marginalized adolescent girls. This framework is supporting operational activities in three pilot countries: Guatemala, Liberia and Malawi.

40. UNICEF has continued to work closely with UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM to promote joint UNCT reporting to pre-sessional working group meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. As part of their collaboration on linking the rights of women and children in their work, UNICEF-UNFPA developed and launched an advocacy booklet, 'Integrating children's and women's rights through the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women', to influence action at the national level. A study on Member States' reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was also launched on the occasion of the 2010 Commission on the Status of Women.

**Engagement with partners**

41. The challenge of identifying and engaging new strategic partners in support of gender excellence was partially addressed in 2009. Partnerships with well-established academic and management institutions in the field of gender equality, such as Academy for Educational Development, the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research and the National University of Lanús, have begun to take shape. However, UNICEF has yet to establish a network of specialists that can play the role of an inspirational and informed think tank to contribute to organizational-level dialogue and planning. Progress was made at the regional and country levels, where new models and partners were identified, notably in Eastern and Southern Africa, but this component of the Action Plan will need to be addressed more systematically in subsequent years.

42. Widespread opportunities exist for UNICEF to promote gender equality by collaborating more strategically and systematically with civil society partners,

including representative organizations of women and girls. UNICEF will conduct a mapping exercise as a basis to better seize opportunities to develop new strategic partnerships with key organizations while building on existing ones, such as the International Center for Research on Women, Save the Children, the Population Council and International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific.

## III. Strategic Priority Action Plan for UNICEF organizational transformation

43. In 2008, UNICEF committed to a two-phased approach in the follow-up to the gender policy evaluation. The first phase consisted in the development of a one-year plan for 2009, aimed at jump-starting the implementation of the management response and laying the foundation for an organizational transformation towards gender excellence. The Global Consultation, held in February 2010, initiated the second phase. The Consultation took stock of the progress realized in implementing the management response and developed a three-year Strategic Priority Action Plan outlining organizational priorities, activities and benchmarks to advance UNICEF gender-equality efforts and to create a network of gender-equality champions. A diverse group of over 70 staff from all regions participated in this meeting.

44. The Consultation offered the opportunity to widen the scope of UNICEF gender-mainstreaming efforts, from institutional levels to that of individual values, enlisting the commitments of regional teams and individual staff members to promote gender equality in their ongoing development and humanitarian work. This approach built on the diversity of the group, comprising various functional areas and age groups, and its wide range of knowledge and experience.

45. The Strategic Priority Action Plan builds on the evaluation's findings and recommendations, and the first phase of the organization's follow-up work. It will guide the second phase of the UNICEF follow-up to the evaluation in 2010-2012. The Action Plan was further developed and reviewed by the Gender Equality Task Force and by UNICEF senior management. It lays out priority actions, with specific activities for a set of strategic areas: (a) accountability at all levels; (b) human capacity and knowledge; (c) leadership, partnerships and influencing; (d) quality programming; (e) resourcing; (f) clear communication; and (g) human resources practice. The Action Plan represents a clear, widely owned and ambitious institutional effort to becoming an organization that promotes excellence in gender mainstreaming, the pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It will be complemented by concerted efforts at the regional, divisional and country levels. These efforts, and the Action Plan itself, will be monitored by the Gender Equality Task Force, which will report on progress to the Global Leadership Team and the Executive Director.

## IV. Conclusion

46. UNICEF is at an important turning point. The one-year plan for 2009 created the initial learning and platform needed to reinforce a gender-equality mindset and to improve practice. Many of the necessary elements are now in place for a sustained effort leading to organizational change that will effectively contribute to the progressive achievement of gender equality while providing support to

developing countries' efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF, in its pursuit of organizational transformation for gender excellence, seeks to develop a culture that values, encourages and rewards innovation and learning, and fosters an inclusive style of leadership and management. Success will be contingent on the continued ability of UNICEF to assess its performance in becoming a champion for gender equality, as outlined in its Mission Statement, and to strategically address the recognized challenges. The support and engagement of the members of the Executive Board will continue to play a key role in ensuring an enabling environment to support UNICEF efforts to promote gender equality.